

the environment, society and the economy

# 1 Sustainable development



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## 1 Sustainable development

Aim: To explore and deepen understanding of the idea / concept of sustainable development and to further examine its application and relevance in three different settings.

### SYLLABUS STATEMENT

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The aim of the syllabus is to:

**...promote the conservation and sustained management of the earth's resources for the welfare and happiness of its inhabitants and for future generations.**

Introduction, Leaving Certificate Geography Syllabus, p.2

Elective Unit 4 –  
Patterns and processes in economic activities

Elective Unit 5 –  
Pattern and processes in the human environment

### OUTCOMES

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Having completed this unit students should be able to:

- > identify the importance of sustainable development at individual, local, national and international levels
- > be aware of conflicts generated by economic pressure on the environment
- > appreciate that major development can take place in a sustainable way
- > be aware of the intrinsic value and aesthetic quality of the natural environment
- > describe the environmental impact assessment process.

### the video clips

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#### 1 HOW SUSTAINABLE IS IRELAND?

From ECOEYE, series 1, programme 1

#### 2 WASTE CRISIS

From THE STATE WE'RE IN, series 2, programme 2

#### 3 THE CASHEL BYPASS / PROTECTION OF HERITAGE

From ECOEYE, series 2, programme 2

#### 4 BANNOW BAY WETLANDS

From ECOEYE, series 1, programme 1



## How sustainable is Ireland?

- 1 What major issue was discussed at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002?

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- 2 In the video, what are cited as the three interconnected aspects of sustainable development?

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- 3 In the Rio Earth Summit, 1992, climate change, forestry and biodiversity were set down as areas for each country to improve on. Ireland has done badly in all three areas. Why is this the case?

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- 4 Comhar is the National Partnership for Sustainable Development. List three of the groups involved in this body. Investigate what the Irish word 'Comhar' means.

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- 5 Who, according to speakers in the video, should act on Comhar's ideas for balancing economic development with environmental needs?

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- 6 In the video, a number of ways in which individuals can improve the environment are mentioned. List these ways.

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- 7 Why do you think cyclists are described as 'the real heroes of sustainable development'?

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- 8 What valuable resources possessed by Ireland are mentioned in the video?

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- 9 A lot of statements about the idea of sustainable development were made in the video. Some examples are listed below:

**'It involves the environment, the economy, and how we live...'**

**'...one way of human living...'**

**'...passing the planet on to our children...'**

**'...development to benefit ourselves and the planet we share...'**

**'...balancing the needs of the moment with the needs of the future...'**

**'...long-term thinking...'**

Outline in your own words what you think sustainable development is about.

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## Waste crisis

- 1 The phrase 'NIMBY' is used by one of the speakers in the video clip. Investigate what the component letters of 'NIMBY' stand for.

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- (a) What year is mentioned in the video as being the turning point in waste management in Ireland?

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- (b) What is the name of the policy introduced at this time to address our waste problems?

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- 2 Why is it argued that we are all part of the problem of waste?

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- 3 How many plastic bags were being used annually in Ireland before the introduction of the plastic bag levy?

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- 4 List some of the problems associated with old-style landfill sites.

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- 5 What can producers and manufacturers do about the waste they produce?

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- 6 List some of the worries you think individuals and communities might have about landfill sites or other waste facilities being located near their homes.

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- 7 The presenter states that many protests happen because change is imposed without involving the people whose lives are affected by the change. Do you think that involving people in the decision-making process / planning of waste facilities would change their views? Explain your answer.

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## The Cashel bypass/protection of heritage

1 What important national site is at Cashel?

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2 The bypass will end the traffic delays in town for motorists. How will the quality of life for the residents of the town improve?

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3 What was agreed between the National Roads Authority (NRA) and the then Minister for Arts, Gaeltacht, Culture and the Islands in their code of practice?

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4 What reason was given in the video for the shortage of Irish archaeologists to work on road-related projects?

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5 How has the local community been involved?

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6 Why are rivers and ponds seen as good places for archaeologists to start their investigations?

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7 What do you think of the approach taken to archaeological heritage in this project?

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## Bannow Bay wetlands

1 What are wetlands?

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2 What are the functions of wetlands?

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3 List three different parts of the Bannow Bay wetlands.

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4 Give two examples of the wildlife in the wetlands.

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5 Why is it suggested that wetlands in Ireland are under threat?

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6 What evidence is cited in the video to show that most people do not appreciate the importance of the wetlands?

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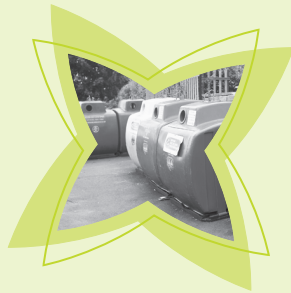
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## HOW SUSTAINABLE IS YOUR LIFESTYLE?

### SUSTAINABILITY CHECK-UP



#### INDIVIDUAL WORK

Ask students to list the changes they could make to their lifestyles to make them more sustainable. Some changes could be grouped under the headings:

- > **Reduce**
- > **Reuse**
- > **Recycle**

Ask students to list examples of sustainable choices in relation to being at home, going shopping and using transport.

#### PAIR WORK

Ask students to share and compare their work with another student and to establish the areas where they agree and disagree.

#### GROUP WORK

Divide the students into groups and ask each group to assess how sustainable the school is. Each group should take one of the following headings and discuss impressions of the situation in their school.

- > **Litter and waste management**
- > **Fuel use**
- > **Transport**
- > **Water**
- > **Outdoor environment**
- > **Environmental policy**

The group should also decide where to go to find out more about its topic. Ask each group to report its findings to the class.

#### GROUP DISCUSSION

Bannow Bay wetlands, Co. Wexford, is the example of an area of natural beauty shown in the video. Ask students to identify similar areas in their own county. For all of these areas, discuss the following questions:

- > Why are the areas or places chosen so valuable or important?
- > What are the threats to the places?
- > How can they be protected and/or conserved?

#### MAP WORK

Using the relevant 1:50,000 OS Discovery Series maps, ask students to locate all the areas of natural beauty / heritage mentioned in the discussion above and to find the grid reference for each place.

#### ASSIGNMENT

**Read students the following background information on Environmental Impact Assessments:**

- > All large scale developments, such as the Cashel bypass, must go through an Environmental Impact Assessment before they can be approved. As part of the process, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is produced by the developer.
- > Every EIS must include:
  - (i) a description of the main effects that the development is likely to have on the environment, with reference to people, flora (plants), fauna (animals), soil, water, landscape, culture and heritage
  - (ii) a description of the measures that the developers hope will prevent, reduce, or remedy these effects.

**Ask students to:**

- > describe the main effects on the environment of the Cashel bypass road that they think would have been included in the EIS, using evidence from the video and the list of headings given above
- > outline the measures that they think were taken to prevent, reduce or remedy the environmental effects that they have identified.

